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REVIEW
OF
THE AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS
OF FRANCE:

WITH A NOTICE OF THE WORKS OF
MM. RUBICHON, MOUNIER, AND PASSY,
RESPECTING ITS PRODUCE,
AND THE
CONDITION OF ITS RURAL POPULATION.

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LABOR IPSE VOLUPTAS.

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REVIEW, &c.

MORE than half a century back our countryman, Arthur Young, published an agricultural account of France, derived from observations he had personally made in the course of his journeys through that country. There were then neither cadastre, surveys, nor statistical authority of any kind worth notice; and for his estimate of her produce and resources, the author was obliged to rely, first, on his own experienced agronomic *coup-d'œil*; then on such information as he could obtain from persons of rank or office in the different provinces; lastly, on calculations deduced from these imperfect data. The numbers of the population were better known, and their general estimated consumption of food per head afforded him the means of checking his view of the total produce of the country, which, in good seasons, he reckoned to be above its wants. Some idea of the difficulties of even an approximate notion of the respective spaces occupied by certain cultures on soils in certain districts may be gathered from the fact that, in Young's book, the extent of some of them is actually calculated by *weight*, and not by measure. Having constructed a skeleton map of the country, on paper of uniform thickness and substance, and marked thereon what, in the course of his travels, had been pointed out to him as mountains, sands, loams, and chalks, this sagacious writer proceeded to cut out and weigh, and ascertain by a rule-of-three sum, the extent of each due to their proportionate number of grains. This operation afforded him 25,513,213 acres of heathy land or waste. The real quantity now, under the official returns, is 22,701,757 acres; and the small difference between the two results is the more remarkable when we contrast the extreme simplicity of the process adopted by Young, with the laborious investigations of the cadastre. And if, as is probably the case, since 1790, any quantity of the heath lands have been

brought into cultivation, from the increase of population, the difference is still further reduced.

With such unavoidable, and certainly venial mistakes, Young continued long the only trustworthy authority on such matters among the French themselves; and even at the present day his statistics concerning their country are quoted with great reliance on their correctness, by their writers on agricultural economy, and among them by the authors at the head of this article.

MM. Rubichon and Mounier have undertaken in this work a very careful examination, not only of the official documents connected with the inheritance, occupation, and produce of the land in France, published by the government, but they have also directed, for the purpose of comparison, an equally patient and laborious attention to the parliamentary documents and other information afforded by our own blue books in England during the last ten or fifteen years. M. Mounier, the nephew, was active as an artillery officer under Don Carlos, in the North of Spain. M. Rubichon, the uncle, is a gentleman now far advanced in life, whose strong prepossessions in favour of the older order of things in France, have no more blinded him to the train of errors committed by the restored Bourbons, than to the despotism of Buonaparte, or the shortcomings of the *royauté consentie* of Louis Philippe.

France appears to have had no statistical account of her territory and productions until the reign of her present sovereign. In that of Louis XIV., Vauban had undertaken a kind of inductive calculation. Observing in some of the provinces of the west the proportions that vines, pastures, arable lands, and woods, gardens, and communes bore to each other, the Marshal proceeded to reckon the quantities thus occupied throughout the kingdom from these various and necessary erroneous data. The *économistes* of the subsequent reign, who bestowed a particular and almost exclusive attention upon agriculture, contented themselves with arguing on the conclusions to be drawn from a basis which had never received the least official verification. The National Assembly, in 1790, charged the celebrated Lavoisier with the task of assessing the land-tax, then imposed, on a correct and just principle. Lavoisier was a farmer-general; a man of business as well as of science, he united the experience of office to the exactness of mathematical theory. Yet so little was understood in those days of the nature of the inquiry committed to him, or of the proper method of conducting it, that he founded all his valuations on the number of ploughs ascertained to be kept. This

shows, at least, how forlorn and incorrect were the notions of some of the ablest men of the time upon this subject. The mathematician, Lagrange, two years after Lavoisier, than whom he was in some respects better qualified, became already aware that considerable errors had been admitted into the calculations of his predecessor. His own supposition was, that the annual consumption of the kingdom was 511·36 lbs. of corn, and 146 lbs. of meat per head; in all, 657·36 lbs., being one-fifth less than the soldiers' ration for the whole population. Another estimate he drew from the *octroi* returns of towns at whose gates the provisions pay a tax on entry. This afforded him an allowance per head of 583·35 lbs. of corn, and 80 lbs. of meat, or in all 663·35 lbs.; the general proportion being of the former to the latter as 7 to 2: while at Paris it was as 21 to 10, and in the manufacturing towns (which were the least well fed) as 15 to 2. Lagrange's estimate is evidently too high: the comparative consumption of all the towns would be much increased by the number of travellers, whether posting or in diligences, whose meals, eaten with the appetite that distinguishes menials, bagsmen, or indeed t. gs. of every sort, would demand an additional introduction of provisions, and swell the apparent portion of each inhabitant of them.

All this, however, was mostly guess work. In 1810 Napoleon gave orders for a general statistical account of his empire, to be based upon the cadastre. The labours of the commission to whom the task was confided were said to have disappointed the Emperor. Very little fruit had been gathered from them, when the Bourbons, on their return in 1814, dissolved the commission and instituted a fresh one. Still the result was meagre and vague. The cadastre gave no account of the number of acres under any description of crop except vineyards; the tax-papers gave no statement of the agriculture of the land assessed any more than our rate-books do in England; and the *octroi* documents only recorded the consumption of the towns, without noting from whence they were supplied. At length, in 1836, the Government addressed a circular to the *préfets*, enjoining them to have registered, by means of *sous-préfets*, *maires*, and other subordinates, in each of the 37,300 communes of France, an inventory of their rural produce, live stock, and account of their consumption. The meridian of Paris cutting France into two nearly equal halves, and then intersecting at the 47th parallel, divide the kingdom into four nearly equal portions: the nord oriental and occidental, the midi oriental and occidental; each containing twenty-one or twenty-two departments, and possessing a nearly equal amount

of population. More than 100,000 persons were employed in the task, which was executed with great care and accuracy. Yet in spite of the extreme minuteness with which the inquiry was conducted, it is even now difficult to ascertain whether the *morcellement* or subdivision of the soil among an infinity of owners, so much deprecated by some, so much insisted upon by others as a cure for all social evils, is proceeding at a rapid or at a moderate pace. That it is increasing we imagine is indisputable: that an indefinite parcelling out of the surface of the country would also be an evil, few can doubt. But whether the *morcellement* is fast tending towards such a condition of things—whether any counteracting or modifying causes are presented by other circumstances, or institutions in the country—on these points we are left in the dark by the *Statistique Agricole*.

In fact, these returns, while they give us the extent of the land under each crop, the quantity and value of the crop, the number of the different owners in each commune, or parish, are not so combined and digested with those of others as to afford a certain and comprehensive view of the state of property in respect of the *morcellement*. An owner may possess fifty acres in as many different parcels of the same commune: he will then figure only as one *côte foncière*,—i.e., be assessable in one sum as for one estate; if a tenth part of this quantity be scattered about in three or four other communes, he will then appear in the same number of returns. The summary or abstract number of *côtes* does not, then, afford an absolute account of the number of owners. An index would; but its compilation would be a task little less troublesome than the cadastre itself; and besides, from the frequency with which, as we shall see, property changes hands in France, it would, in a few years, become of no avail.

The whole extent of France and Corsica is 130,338,486 English acres. Omitting roads, rivers, fortresses, crown property, buildings, &c., its *superficie imposable*, or as we should term it, rateable land, appears to be 49,878,208 hectares, or 123,197,173 acres.

In 1789-90, Arthur Young reckoned the value of the gross produce per acre over the whole kingdom at a trifle over 35s., and that the wheat lands averaged 16 bushels an acre. The authors of “*Patria*,” a recent statistical compendium, yet in the course of publication, put it at only 32s. From the tables given in the work before us, we think it should be a little higher than “*Patria* ;” and we will now lay before the reader the principal figures of the computation, premising that the

measures of surface and capacity, as well as the price, have, for the sake of convenience and comprehension, been turned throughout into their English equivalents.

English acres.			s.	d.
34,333,647	of cereals	produce	54	7
6,819,382	„ divers cultures	„	87	4
16,705,306	„ fallows	„	4	7
10,369,546	„ meadows	„	37	2
3,894,171	„ artificial grasses	„	43	4
<hr/>				
72,122,052				

Hence 72,122,052 acres of what we should term in England under the plough and scythe, thus yield 34*s.* 1½*d.* per acre. More than a quarter of the whole of the breadth producing a rotation of crops (which, deducting the meadows, is 61,752,506 acres), appears to receive a naked fallow; we suppose, at least, that the trifling item of 4*s.* 7*d.* an acre, with which these 16,705,306 acres are credited, arises from the browsing of such natural weeds and vegetation as may spring up after the corn crop has been taken off, and before the ploughing has recommenced.

There are, however, 22,702,957 acres of commons, wastes, and pastures, yielding 3*s.* an acre. We are not informed whether any, and what proportion of them, are in severalty, but it is probably very small—the climate of France being for the most part unfavourable to pasturage (except in the deep alluvial soils near the rivers, and on the mountain sides and hill tops); the plains only remain, therefore, in a state of pasture, on account of the difficulties in the way of enclosure, on which our authors enlarge. If we are to bring their small acreable produce into hotch-pot, the average yield would be lower than we have stated it; the 72,122,052, with the addition of the 22,702,952 acres of waste at 3*s.*, would be 99,695,513 acres at 33*s.* 7½*d.* per acre. But such pastures, wastes, and commons would not, in England, be the subject of any separate rating or distinct valuation, though, no doubt, they would be considered in the rental or assessment of the farms to which they were appurtenant: and this is the fair way, it strikes us, of considering their apparent equivalent in France. We should in that case apportion their money value 3,419,433*l.* among the 72,122,059 acres before mentioned as under the plough and scythe, whose gross yield would then be increased by 11½*d.* an acre, making in all 35*s.* 0¾*d.*

We have hitherto excluded vines from our calculations, wishing, in the first place, to afford the means of comparing

together the crops which are common to this country and to France. Accordingly, with the exception of maize, the acreable value of which produce appears to be below that of the other corn crops, and of tobacco* [of which less than 20,000 acres are grown], the whole of the 72,122,052 acres hitherto mentioned, are occupied by crops with which we are familiar in England, and which our own soil and climate ripen equally well. There are, however, 4,871,680 acres of vineyards, with a gross receipt of 71s. 8d. per acre. The whole country then is thus divided :—

	English Acres.	According to A. Young, in 1790.
Ordinary tillage	34,333,647	
Diverses cultures	6,819,382	
Fallows	16,705,306	
Artificial grasses	3,894,171	
	<hr/> 61,752,506	English Acres. Arable 70,000,000
Meadows	10,369,546	
Pasture & wastes	22,702,171	
	<hr/> 33,071,717	{ Meadow, & pasture, & water } 36,872,711
Vineyards	4,871,680	Vines 5,000,000
Orchards, ozier beds, nurseries, olives, &c. }	3,578,699	
Woods, timber and coppice	21,747,238	Woods 19,850,000
	<hr/>	
Total du domaine agricole	125,021,840	Vines produced 76s. 6d.
Other surfaces (not rateable)	5,319,504	per acre, and woods 12s.,
	<hr/>	being cut at 17 years' growth.
Total of France and Corsica	130,341,344	

Into the annual produce of the woods (9s. 6d. per acre), the vineyards, orchards, chestnut groves, nurseries, &c., it is not at present worth while to enter; they do not, either, give the measure of the current annual value of the land, being in fact, the result of thrift, abstinence, and forethought of former possessors, who planted and provided, to their own temporary exclusion, those of which the present generation thus reap the benefit. It is as to the rate of produce, as far as it can be compared with that of our own country, that this record is interesting to us: 35s. an acre is the average obtained from seventy-two millions of acres, a result which no one conversant

* Tobacco appears to give the largest return in money per acre of any crop except hops; we know, however, that in this country the expense of cultivation of the latter is enormous, and a corresponding condition in France may account for the small growth of so apparently lucrative a plant.

with agricultural affairs can peruse without surprise ; and this after we have thrown into the scale, for the sake of comparing it with England*, the common right over nearly twenty-three millions more. But this is not all. Very nearly seven millions are stated to be in *diverses cultures*, that is, potatoes, buck-wheat, legumes, beet-root, hops, rape, flax, hemp, tobacco, and woad. We described this erroneously as arable, wishing to bring it succinctly under the reader's notice, but, in reality, it is mainly raised by spade husbandry and by manual labour. In fact, M. Jung, a writer in "Patria," says there are no less than forty million acres cultivated by the spade in France. Now, whatever may be the disadvantages belonging to the *petite culture*, however well-founded may be the apprehensions put forward in opposition to the general extension of field-gardens and allotments in England, it is generally admitted that their produce is much greater, that the land yields far more than under the operation of the plough ; the objection with us being, that if its quantity is carried beyond a mere supplementary aid to the labourer's comforts, if it induces him to rely too much upon it, and to give up working for wages, it may augment the evil it is intended to remedy, by unduly stimulating a population who will, instead of eventually earning therefrom a decent livelihood, be content, as in Ireland, to satisfy a grovelling existence. The bulk raised is certainly larger, it may amount to 20*l.* or 25*l.* per acre, instead of the 4*l.* or 5*l.* that the farmer raises, but if it costs the latter 1*l.* or 30*s.* to raise them, and it occupy the labourer or peasant three-

* Mr. M'Culloch, in his statistical account of the British empire, supposed that in England out of 12,000,000 of acres cultivated, only 1,650,000 were fallow, that is, little more than one-seventh. In France, the fallows are above one-fourth. His estimate was—

	Acres.	Rate of Produce.	Quarters.	s.	£
Wheat	3,800,000	3½	12,350,000	at 50	30,875,000
Barley and rye	900,000	4	3,600,000	at 30	5,400,000
Oats and beans	3,000,000	4½	13,500,000	at 25	16,875,000
Roots	1,200,000	} at £5 5 0			13,125,000
Clover	1,300,000				
Gardens and hops	150,000	„ £15 0 0			2,225,300
Fallows	1,650,000				
<hr/>					
	12,000,000	arable			£68,525,000
Grass and meadows	17,000,000	at £3 10 0 per acre			59,000,000
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	29,000,000	acres at			£128,025,000

Mr. M'Culloch, indeed, by increasing the money value of one of the corn crops, makes the gross total amount to £132,500,000. We have been moderate, and have taken the lowest of his figures, which is, perhaps, too high. Even then the gross produce comes to £4 8*s.* 3*d.* per acre ; and after every allowance for the possible exaggeration of that eminent author, it is a striking contrast with the 35*s.* of the neighbouring kingdom.

fourths of his time from year end to year end (which at 10s. per week would be 20*l.*), there is, economically speaking, the reverse of gain ; since his labour, after replacing its cost, brings in only 25 per cent. additional, while the farmer's capital does as much and far more, and enables him to send a greater produce to market. Keeping these reflections in mind, it must be owned that the very slender return obtained by a population so generally engaged in agriculture as the French are, is astonishing. In England, about three men to 100 acres is the general average, while in France, every 100 acres of the rateable surface occupies 8·17 men*. M. Dupin, in his "*Forces Productives*,†" says there are 810 *travailleurs* to every 2,470 acres in France, meaning the combined strength of men and animals in France equalled that number, or in all 37,278,511 ; whilst, according to the same author, in England the quota was 1,138 to 2,470 acres, or in all 24,632,446, of which the men were 2,132,446 only ; the rest, their equivalent in animals, at the rate of seven men to a horse, two and a half to an ox. We may add, that in France there are 240,000 asses, each reckoned equal to a man !

M. Rubichon, taking the whole superficies of what he terms the *domaine agricole*, finds that it gives a mean return equal to 30s. per acre ; this is lower than our own figures, and lower, also, than other computations by the French themselves, but that difference is only 2s. or 3s. per acre. M. Rubichon embraces in this result the 21,747,238 of timber and coppice, which bring in 9s. 6*d.* per acre, and the 22,702,957 acres of wastes at 3s., which, together with vineyards, we have excluded from our average, being anxious to present to the English reader the relative yield of the crops with which he is familiar, and having purposely omitted from our calculations those peculiar occupations of the soil which either unduly lower the gross total, or are irrelevant to the inquiry in hand. 35s. an acre is, indeed, a miserable return wherewith to pay rent, taxes, and expences of cultivation for the land. We have seen that A. Young estimated the yield at sixteen bushels of wheat the acre, it is now 14·25 hectolitres per hectare ; that is, very little more than fourteen bushels and a half an acre. The account is quite as discouraging in the department of live stock. The numbers annually slaughtered are, oxen and cows‡,

* If we exclude the woods there remain only 80,372,431, which makes the average employment of 9·5 men to 100 acres.

† Page 116.

‡ The beasts are killed at four years' old, and are thus 25 per cent. of those living ; cows at eight years old ; sheep at three years ; ewes at nine ; pigs, from nine months to one year.

1,211,861; calves, 2,487,362, in all of cattle, 3,699,233. Of sheep and ewes, there are 5,804,681. The average weight of the ox is 686 lbs., the cow, 506 lbs.; calves, 173 lbs.; of the sheep, 50·6 lbs.; pigs and goats weighing respectively 201·7 lbs., and 48·6 lbs., yield a total of 673,389,781 kilogrammes, or about 44 lbs. per head to a population of thirty-four millions.*

It is demonstrable, not only that the Frenchman is much worse off than the Englishman, but that he is less well fed than during the devastating exhaustion of the empire. The present consumption of wheat is 4·73 bushels per head on the population throughout France, the highest being in six departments of the Midi Oriental, where it is 5·97 bushels (25 per cent. less than the average in England); the lowest is in twelve departments also of the Midi Oriental, where the allowance is but 2·64 bushels. So that while our portion in England is (at the rate of one quarter per head) equivalent to twenty ounces of bread *per diem*, the Frenchman is obliged to content himself with ten ounces, according to Parmentier's calculation; in addition to which, there are for him one ounce and two-thirds of meat daily, compared with our six ounces. M. Rubichon may well remark on the extreme sobriety of his countrymen, whose allowance, he says, is only one-third that of the soldier or the convict. This may be true, but it is not conclusive. Soldiers and convicts being mostly men in the prime of life, performing certain duties requiring fair sustenance. When the *average* of a population is taken, there are, in the first place, one half of them women, who eat less—(Gasparin reckons that women consume two-thirds only of what the the working man eats, and children one-third)—besides the children and aged, who are smaller consumers. M. Rubichon, however, justly censures a member of the French Chamber of Peers (probably Rossi) for having asserted that the French nation was the best fed, clothed, housed, and employed on the face of the globe, not excepting England; and he then exclaims against the flatterers, whether of the despot or of the people. That such an assertion could have been swallowed,

* Mr. M'Culloch (Statistical Account of British Empire) thinks we have in Great Britain 5,220,000 head of cattle, of which one-fourth (1,305,000) are annually slaughtered, and about 39,648,000 sheep. Some French authors put our numbers higher. M. Ternaux, a celebrated breeder and flock master, reckoned us to possess 45,000,000 sheep. Speck thought 55,000,000, giving at 3 and 4 years old 60lb. of mutton each, while France had only 30,000,000, which at 6 and 7 years only netted 30lbs. Many complaints are made of the division of land as being fatal to flocks, among others, by Count Louis de Villeneuve, President of the Agricultural Society of Toulouse.

by either the one or the other, is strange, when the population of Paris is known to have increased 40 per cent. since 1816, and yet, in spite of affluence, royalty, garrisons, and strangers, the number of beasts introduced for consumption has diminished rather than otherwise.

“In some countries,” observes M. Rubichon, “that pass for rich, the inhabitants may be poor enough notwithstanding. In one of the most fertile parts of the Austrian Empire, the Lombardo-Venetian kingdom, with a population of 314 to the square mile, there are but 176 head of cattle to every 1,000 inhabitants. In the part of its dominions which abuts against Turkey, it has been the policy of the empire to rely on feudalism for its defence against the Moslim; the population there is scanty, but in better circumstances; the proportion of cattle is 554 to every 1,000 inhabitants.” We would merely remark *en passant*, that the mere co-existence of these two orders in the creation in such and such relative quantities, is itself no proof of prosperity; and that to give entire assent to his opinion, we ought to know what share those 1,000 inhabitants obtain of the 554 beasts. We believe that they are reared for exportation, as cattle are in the Highlands, for the betters of those that rear them; the betters being, in some cases, as we know, the English serjeants, corporals, and rank and file, stationed in the Ionian Islands, for whose supply these Transylvanian quadrupeds end their career by a six weeks’ walk, down from the plains of the Danube to Prevesa and the coast of Albania. In our own country, according to M’Culloch, if his statistical accuracy in a matter so problematical is to be relied on, there are the *equivalent* of 9,184,000 *cattle*; that is, assuming with M. Rubichon that 39,640,000 sheep are equal to one-tenth of that number of beasts, and adding them to the 5,220,000 cattle, we have 9,184,000, or about $564\frac{1}{2}$ beasts to every 1,000 inhabitants in Great Britain; this, however, was according to the census of 1831. Mr. M’Culloch’s work was compiled with reference to that, and not to the later census, whose results were not known. But there is every reason to believe that the supplies of animal food have advanced *pari passu* with the population since, and that the rise in price which has taken place has been from the enormous appetite of several hundred thousand railway navigators, artisans, &c., earning high wages, and who have thus been unexpectedly thrown into the provision market as competitors. Vauban, Bossuet, and La Grange, three men of totally different pursuits, habits, and ideas—war, religion, and science, generals, bishops, and philosophers—have each told us in different language, what amounts to the same thing, that the richest and most comfort-

able nation is that which can afford to eat the most meat; but then men of their capacity considered well the subject; they seem to have weighed men as well as counted them (a suggestion of the late M. Th. Sadler), whereas the materialist of the present day looks only to facts, figures, and acres.

We observed before, that the condition of the French people and their command over the necessities of life had rather retrograded since the peace. MM. Rubichon and Mounier show that the harvest of 1815 yielded only twelve bushels the acre: the most abundant crop was in 1832, when the produce was 21·7 bushels the acre.* From 1816 to 1825 the average price in France has been 61s. the imperial quarter; from 1826 to 1836, it has been 55s. 6*d.* It has been the custom to hold out the greater cheapness or plenty of corn abroad, as one of the advantages enjoyed by the foreign manufacturer over our own. We see that in France wheat is neither plentiful nor cheap: in the corresponding periods, from 1816 to 1825, the price in England was 65s. 0⁷/₁₀*d.*; in the latter period, from 1826 to 1832, it was 56s. 9*d.*, being respectively 6·1 per cent. and 2·2 per cent. above the average French prices, a fact equally embarrassing to the ultra free-traders as well as protectionists.

Léon Faucher, in his “*Etudes sur l'Angleterre*,” speaking of the low wages in Dorsetshire, says, “however it may be for England, it is a rate which is only obtained by the French labourer in the immediate vicinity of Paris.”

The comparative condition of the population of Paris in respect of provisions will best appear from the following table, calculated by M. Bénéiton de Cheteauneuf, for the following periods:—

Population of Paris....	1789. 600,000.	1817. 714,000.	1827. 802,000.	1837. 841,700.
	lb. oz.	lb. oz.	lb. oz.	lb. oz.
Butcher's meat, per hd...	147 0	110 9	110 3	98 11
Pork, &c.	9 12	20 9	18 1	17 1
Game and poultry	22 9	19 0	18 4	13 12
Bottles of wine	120	114	126	111
„ beer	9	11	20	13
„ brandy	4	6	5	11
Wood (voie)	1			
Coal „	1	1	1	1

* 8·60 hectolitres per hectare, 15·52 hect. per hectare.

This document suggests much matter for reflection. It appears, that while butcher's meat has decidedly decreased, a considerable augmentation has taken place in the coarse inferior meat; pork, for instance, has nearly doubled. In the former period, the Parisian allowance of flesh of all sorts was 179 lbs., of which only 5 per cent. was pork; in the latter, it is but 130 lbs.—a diminution of above one-fourth; whilst of what he *now* has, 17 per cent. is pork.

The decreased allowance of wine has been nearly balanced by a greater consumption of beer; no bad exchange, probably, for the inferior kinds of wine with which the lower classes are obliged to content themselves. The share of wood fuel to each inhabitant has been lessened to one-half, as might have been expected, while as yet the deficiency has not been made good by the introduction of coal, of which the proportion burnt appears to have sustained no alteration in sixty years. In a work on the “*Culture des Bois*,” published in 1840 by M. Thomas, an extensive dealer in wood, the writer stated the consumption of Paris (600,000 voies) required the produce or fall of 50,392 acres of coppice or taillis of twenty years' growth; and, therefore, that the whole extent of land requisite for supplying Paris with fuel would be 1,007,480 acres—that is, a district equal to the three counties of Middlesex, Surrey, and Hertfordshire*, and 4,320 acres more.

M. Thomas, a hard-working provincial, grumbles (not with a very good grace, as our readers will think) at the excessive demand at Paris for the article in which he deals, thrives, and writes about. “*C'est un véritable gouffre que cette ville . . . qui paye 88,740,815 francs d'impôt, et qui enfin possède 175 journeaux quotidiens, hebdomadaires,*” &c. How, he asks, are these papers to be read at home, or at cafés, and smoking-rooms, unless one's hands and feet are warm? Paris, too, he complains, “has her army of *employés*, who are to be warmed seven or eight months of the year; it has 2,000 bankers and stock-brokers, 1,800 doctors, 910 lawyers, &c., and a host of other functionaries and sinecurists (much the objects of his ill-will), but who must, nevertheless, be provided with an agreeable temperature, in order that they may comfortably spend the fifth part of the budget,” which he declares they share among them. In short, at the Ministère des Finances (the Treasury Chambers at Paris), 4,000 to 5,000 stères (2,000 to 2,500

*Middlesex	180,480
Surrey	485,120
Hertfordshire.	337,920
	<hr/>
	1,003,520

voies) are burnt every season, which is equal to the supply of all Paris in the reign of Philip le Bel (A. D. 1289). When the northern railways transport coal from the mines of the Ardennes, the use of wood as fuel will be lessened, even if it does not wholly disappear; and so, we grieve to think, will the freshness of colour and outline of the Parisian edifices.

On the subject of the meat trade in the French metropolis. a government commission in 1841, reported that the price of coarse meat for the lower classes had risen from $3\frac{1}{2}d.$ to $4\frac{1}{2}d.$ the pound, to $5d.$ and $5\frac{1}{2}d.$; and that for the more affluent, from $5\frac{1}{2}d.$ and $6d.$ to $7d.$ and $7\frac{1}{2}d.$ Yet between 1824 and 1839, the butchers declared there was a falling off both in quality as well as size: in the oxen, from 748 lbs. to 686 lbs.; beasts, in short, decreasing 7 of our London stones of 8 lbs.; a sheep half a stone (4 lbs.) in the last fifteen or twenty years. In 1710 the Commissioner De la Mare reckoned the average net weight of an ox to be 800 or 900 lbs., it is now 650 or 660 lbs.; and their tallow, which in 1835 amounted to 5600 tons, weighed only 5066 tons in 1840, though in the latter year forty-five more beasts were slaughtered than in the former.

So long ago as 1806, M. Sauvegrain, the Giblett of Parisian butchers, had observed the great decrease both in the number and weight of beasts supplied to the capital since 1783. M. Sauvegrain appears to have been a *laudator temporis acti* in his way, and of course a conservative. He accordingly attempted to account for it by the revolutionary disappearance of the French country gentlemen, the little seigneurs of old times, many of whom lived on their properties and farmed their own land by working as many as twenty pairs of oxen, fattening and selling off a fifth of them every year, and thus supplying a regular and fixed proportion to the consumption of the country. M. Sauvegrain's doctrine (*à la fois homme d'état et boucher*, says M. Rubichon), the real butcher statesman-combination principle is, "*that all importation is costly to the country which has recourse to it;*" and he endeavours to prove it by the mention of two attempts made by government, once in 1784, and again in 1804, to obtain 7000 or 8000 oxen from Switzerland, Brisgau, Swabia, and other parts of Germany, in seven months time; yet, on both occasions, in spite of the influence of the government, the contractors were not able to introduce above half that quantity. We have no leisure to enter into the causes of this failure, or to inquire whether this would always exist, so as to preclude England from having the benefit of free trade in that important branch of provisions;

hitherto they have not come over in very great numbers. But returning to our statesmen of the cleaver. "Heureuse la France, heureuse la restauration," fervently ejaculates M. Rubichon, "*si ce boucher eût été ministre, et nos ministres bouchers !*" to which latter sentiment of their brother protectionist, the noble leaders of that party in both houses of parliament would devoutly say, Amen. As far as our late free-trading premier was concerned, they would have no objection to his really becoming a flesher ; ending, indeed, his career as the unhappy parvenu Terentius Varro had begun his, and thus dimly associating the destruction of the corn laws with the disaster of Cannæ. We are sure, however, that Lord George Bentinck's love of the turf would make him recoil with horror from one of the results of protection. France has carried this principle to as great an extreme in the article cattle, as did England in that of corn, the duty on importation having been 45*s.* 10*d.* per head, equal, perhaps, to 15 or 20 per cent. *ad valorem*. The consequence of the inaccessibility of meat, has been a resort (in Paris at least) to carrion : the horse, subject to no *octroi*, has been largely, though privately eaten. True, the sale of him as food is illegal, but necessity knows no law, and a hungry belly obeys none. All the power and vigilance of police, gendarmerie, and municipal guard, has been unable to repress the increasing tendency to consume this faithful companion and servant of the human race. We have little doubt that he forms the basis, the stock-pot of the ragouts and entremets at all the cheap and suspicious restaurateurs at Paris, where the unwary provincial, the railway witness, *e. g.* is told, "*ici l'on dîne à 25 sous,*" (1*s.* 0½*d.*) We knew, indeed, that a civet de matou was often served up to our own ignorant countryman, such as an army agent, or railway adventurer, who went to Paris, treated himself to French cookery, and heard himself called a *milor Anglois* ; but this did not argue any great depravity or general corruption of the national taste, like that which we have described. After all, perhaps, we are wrong in condemning these hippophagi. The horse is a cleaner animal than the hog, which is proscribed throughout the Bramin, Moslem, and Hebrew races. By the Tartars and North American Indians, no great epicures to be sure, he is considered a dainty.

Not that this unnatural use of this noble animal increases the supply of him ; quite the reverse. The price, we are told, has risen on an average, 5*l.* or 6*l.* The heavy cavalry (carabineers and cuirassiers) now give 30*l.* ; dragoons, lancers, and artillery, 24*l.* ; hussars and chasseurs, the lightest, 20*l.* And yet again in 1845 the price has risen 2*l.* a piece, and 4*l.* for the officers'

chargers, they being mounted by the state. The French military service requires, according to M. Rubichon—

	In time of Peace.	In war.
For the cavalry.	40,244	56,624
„ artillery	9,598	42,076
„ engineers. . . .	150	621
„ waggon train	1,064	7,728
	<hr/> 51,056 <hr/>	<hr/> 107,049 <hr/>

We see, however, from an article in “Patria,” by M. M. Lalanne, that in 1845 the actual number of horses in the French army was 87,217, of which number 17,571 are employed in Algeria. There has been an annual remonte from native-bred horses of something less than 5,000; and in the ten years 1831—1840 an average importation of 38,464. The 37,643 horses purchased abroad for the army in 1840 cost 27*l.* a piece. The wear and waste appear very large, the term of service hardly reaching three years. It must be remembered, however, that during the whole of that time the French have been constantly worried by the description of warfare carried on in Algeria, where campaigns against Bedouins, Cabyles, or Memlouks, are sure to be fatal to numbers of the northern bred animals, as also to their riders. Besides reckless expenditure has from the commencement been the order of the day at Algiers. M. Ramibot indeed (*Richesse Publique*) says, “Eh bien ! avec de l’argent on fera naître des chevaux ;” which is true : but it will not do to begin breeding when a war breaks out, on the chance of its lasting six or seven years, to be closed with a brilliant charge of home-bred cavalry. Since the disappearance of the establishments of the old noblesse and country gentlemen, who were breeders for the saddle and for harness, the French have always had difficulty in mounting any large force of cavalry at home. The directory, the consulate, the empire, exacted contributions from all the world : 100,000 horses crossed the Nieman in 1812, of which all but 5 000 remained to feed the vulture between it and Moscow. But the loss (when the French arms began to decline) was not recovered. After Lutzen and Bautzen, Napoleon observed, that had he possessed a corresponding force of cavalry, he should have re-conquered the world ; but it existed no more. Grouchy, one of his best officers of that arm, finding no employment in it for him, retired for a time, only re-appearing to assume the command of a division of infantry when France was

invaded. Even the *gendarmérie*, scattered all over the country, with every advantage of being on the spot, and opportunity for buying their own horses, obtain three-fourths of them from Germany. In fact, since Preseau, who wrote on these subjects in 1788, lamented that France possessed only 3,300 stallions, from which an annual breed of 100,000 horses might be expected, the number has declined to 900—little more than a fourth part of what a good judge had pronounced deplorably little nearly sixty years since. She will at this rate soon fall into the condition of Spain and Portugal, where a horse is a rarity, and mules are the order of the day. The light cavalry there ride ponies—very useful for outpost duty and carrying messages, but quite incapable of combining weight with speed in the conflict, where both are wanted. General Long, who commanded the allied cavalry in the action at Campo Mayor on Lady Day, 1811, describes the English 13th Light Dragoons “with the rapidity characteristic of that arm,” charging sabring, and pursuing the French heavy cavalry even to the glacis of Badajoz; “but the pace of the Portuguese *ponies* could not be extended consistent with the preservation of the order which, with ill-formed troops, is with difficulty maintained;” “. . . and a troop of the French advancing and shouting, my Portuguese friends (on the aforesaid ponies) got alarmed, broke away, and fled in disorder.’ ”

A French writer, on the other hand, pays us the compliment of thinking all our hacks, machiners, and posters, fit for cavalry; and truly they are so when compared with those of most other nations. Numerically, however, we have not much to boast of over our neighbours. The number of horses in France is supposed to be 2,500,000. Jung, in “*Patria*,” says more than 2,800,000. Mr. M‘Culloch thinks that in Great Britain there are 1,500,000; others, 1,800,000; but these do not take account of ponies or, perhaps, of exempted horses used in the yeomanry, nor those of the regular cavalry. Altogether we have probably not more than 2,000,000 of horses of all sorts.*

M. Rubichon is in a dilemma from the dearth of horses and cattle. Wishing that France should be powerful and well prepared for war (which, without cavalry, she cannot be), he is anxious for the increase of that animal; but then this can only happen by the exclusion of the ox—an unfortunate choice between honour and starvation. Every horse in England has been reckoned to cost as much in maintenance as a labourer’s

* Mr. M‘Queen makes the number 2,250,000.

family. M. Louis Blanc, in his “*Histoire de Dix Ans*,” shows there are some stables where things are less economically managed. Alluding to the 300 *chevaux de luxe* maintained for the royal equipages, at an expense, it is said, of *mille écus* each, “*Pourquoi traiter*,” asks he, “chacun de ces chevaux comme un conseiller de cour royale, et deux fois mieux qu’un membre de l’institut?” Either the horse is extravagantly dear, or the councillor is marvellously cheap—we cannot stop to examine which. The institute is still worse off, as a pair of *savans* are thereby reckoned equal to one royal quadruped.

“Fifty years ago,” observes M. Rubichon, “there were in every 100 families 50 of the peasant and 50 of a superior order.” Now there are 75 peasants, and only 25 of the higher class; and this proportion again will in no long time change to 85 peasant families and 15 of the other classes; they will then look on the inhabitants of towns (those who may own land without tilling it by their own hands) as enemies. Famine, sedition, privy conspiracy, and rebellion, against which our litany weekly prays that we may be delivered, our author looks upon as the necessary result of constant and minute division of the soil, rendered compulsory by the law of succession. In aiming at equality, it enforces poverty. In families, he says, of five persons, there are generally two who can work, and who maintain the other three; but out of six heads of families who die, only *one* exceeds 500 francs (20*l.*), the rest do not leave behind them enough “*de quoi se faire enterrer*.” We are told, “that it is an error to infer that inequality of territorial fortune entails a corresponding inferiority of subsistence—people do not eat their land, but that which the land produces. Equality in the division of subsistence—that is the only one reducible to practice—the only one which five-sixths of the nation (that is, *the people*) claim in return for labour far more severe than that which is borne by the other sixth, to whom the name of *the public* is given.” That is, the law-making, tax-collecting, office-holding public, who oppose their hateful minority to the labourer, soldier, artisan, and operative.

“Persons,” he continues, “who doubt these facts may consult the English commissioners of inquiry into the state of the hand-loom weavers—men who believe themselves, and whom we imagine to be the most unfortunate of mankind: they establish clearly before the committees of Parliament the quantum of food necessary for their existence—it is of three or four times the value (in money) of what our peasants of the south of France consume, who only get chestnuts, dry pulse,

Indian corn, barley, and rye. These English hand-loom weavers are very unhappy because they can only obtain bread and work in a very precarious manner. *We will only observe that there has in all times been more inequality in France than in England in this respect: but we are ourselves an eye-witness that the Revolution (No. 1.) has increased these inequalities tenfold.*"

It does not appear, however, that the division of the land which he so much complains of dates only from the Revolution. The legislation consequent on that event rendered it compulsory—at first absolutely vesting in the children the whole inheritance; at last leaving to the parent the disposal, by will, of one share more than the number of the issue; so that if there were but one child, half, if two, a third of the estate was at the disposition of the testator. The decay of the landed aristocracy began in Louis the Fourteenth's time. Long wars and constant court service—the one as expensive as the other—were too much for their estates: the *gens-de-robe*, legal persons, bought everything. Parliaments (not in our honoured sense of the word), confraternities of associated lawyers, clans of attorneys, crept into general administration and possession; became judges and stewards of all ecclesiastical and corporate property—just as Lincoln's Inn Fields have among us at the present day. They it was who *invented* the dictum "*fief et justice n'ont rien de commun*;" and again, "*toute justice émane du roi*:" with about as much truth as there was in the fictions resorted to by our courts of law, in order to assert a common recovery, before the 3 & 4 Will. 4. put an end to that curious ceremonial. In principle it might no doubt be an advantage, but the parliaments do not appear to have distinguished themselves by their purity or discrimination, in administering the justice which they usurped from the seigneur haut-justicier. Witness the unhappy martyrdom of Calas by that of Toulouse, which Voltaire has consigned to deserved infamy.

The imperative *morcellement* was, however, much arrested by twenty-two years of war, up to 1815, which settled a number of co-heirs. One law gave a man a bit of land, another marched him off from the cultivation of it to the Tagus, the Niemen, or the Danube, where perhaps he left his bones; but "in 1815, with the peace, the *prisoners and the armies re-entered France. . . . At this period the mattock goes to work on hotels, convents, and churches in the towns, as on the castles and abbeys in the country—the axe fells the

* This curious order of precedence is the Authors'.

trees scattered about on the plains as it does the forests on the mountains : the soil crumbles down the hill sides—the torrents devastate towns—the plough first, and then the spade, come to break up the meadows by the sides of rivers, as well as the sandy heaths of the interior—and all this by opulent companies, organised for the express purpose. This indeed is the only unity of action that France has exhibited at this period, for there is not a single town, not a village, hamlet, or even family, which has not participated in these destructions, or been a victim to them. Never, perhaps, since the creation of the world, did the human race perpetrate a similar suicide. Sylla forced his 6000 prisoners to slaughter each other ; but here all these destructions have been voluntary. Yet this has been termed the Restoration !!!”

In 1814, in the Abbé de Montesquiou’s ministry, we learn that a plan was in contemplation (originating with M. Dambray, a large landed proprietor, and president of the Chamber of Peers,) for purchasing, by means of a joint-stock company, landed property, which was to be held by the shareholders in a sort of entail ; the project included also the erection of model farms in most of the communes of the kingdom : “ But it excited,” says M. Rubichon, “ the energetic hostility of the President of the Chamber of Deputies : he saw in it what there really was, a *corps de noblesse* ; and he naturally felt violent prejudices against the advantages of birth. He had been born happy man !) *esclave, mulâtre, et bâtard*. Gifted with great eloquence, his disinterestedness and his integrity were above all suspicion, and his morals were pure. Nevertheless, this austere republican ended by relenting*, and permitting himself to be made first a count, then a peer, and at last to receive a *cordon bleu*.” This gentleman, whom M. Rubichon thus celebrates, without naming him, we imagine to be the Vicomte Lainé, formerly deputy of the Gironde, in which department he certainly wore the red cap of liberty in 1793. He was again active under the empire, but against its master ; and it was to him Buonaparte, while receiving the legislative body previous to starting for the campaign of France, wrathfully observed, “ *il faut laver son linge sale en famille ;*” alluding to the discord in their debates, which he wished to keep secret from the knowledge of the allies.

M. Lainé was made a peer in 1824 or 1825. We cannot quite forgive him for composing for the Duc de Richelieu the speech in which the latter demanded the sacrifice of Marshal

* Some years, however, after the bill was thrown out.

Ney, of which he had the unenviable reputation. “*Quelle orgie politique que la restauration,*” says Rubichon. “The proposed plan dropped of itself. Besides, the Isle of Elba sent us back her guest ; and people again compromised themselves for liberty and equality. . . . Our descendants will be unable to believe it.”

Under the *ministère des honnêtes gens* (1826), as they are somewhat satirically termed, a law was introduced by the *garde-des-sceaux* in order to effect a partial renewal of primogeniture and entails. M. Rubichon thinks it was perfectly puerile—that the authors of it admitted themselves that it would leave matters much as it found them. The report to the Chamber of Peers in support of it, of which he has given extracts, appears to have been a comprehensive and sensible document ; “but the debates which followed among the French peers were ludicrous, from their ignorance of the subject—they excited the sarcasm of the strangers that attended them. Mr. Canning was of the number—he there learnt the humiliating condition of our landed property—he had no idea of it before : he now saw that in France there were no longer either men or things. In going out he made his celebrated prophecy (a well-founded one in our opinion, unless we alter our course), ‘We shall retake, in fifty years’ time, our provinces of the west of France.’”

The report alluded to, speaking of the successions and divisions* of estates, says, “*Chacun s’obstine à vouloir une portion dans chaque espèce de biens, dans chaque champ, dans chaque prè’ même dans la grange et la maison d’habitation.*” This is truly intolerable !—conceive the number of pathways, easements, and nuisances created by such a division, even of the land, which can never again be recovered ; but then the barns and the houses are to be sliced up. If there are but two co-heirs the former may be managed : each has a bay in the barn, and there is only the trifling inconvenience of a little mixing of the corn ; but a house, of which an attic may be sold off, with a right of way to it through the chief occupier’s kitchen—yet these are among the contingencies of the *morcellement*.†

* It was observed that the total annual value of all the majorats or entails erected since the first authorisation to do so in 1808, amounted only to £183,734 of income, of which about three-fourths were in land. This, divided among 307 persons, gives an average value of rather less than £600 a-year for each, no very formidable fortune.

† Michelet Hist. de France, vol. 2, p. 284, speaking of Grénoble—“*La propriété est divisée au point que telle maison a dix propriétaires, chacun d’eux possédant & habitant une chambre.*”

But it is time to draw the reader's attention to the statistics of the *morcellement* itself. France and Corsica contained, in 1815, 10,083,751 *côtes foncières* (*i. e.* distinct properties separately assessed to the land-tax), which, in 1835, had increased to 10,893,528.

Of these properties	5,205,411	paid less than	5 francs	of impôt
		paid from	5 to	10 each.
„	1,751,994	„	10 „	20 „
„	1,514,251	„	20 „	30 „
„	739,206	„	30 „	40 „
„	684,165	„	50 „	100 „
„	553,230	„	100 „	300 „
„	341,159	„	300 „	500 „
„	57,555	„	500 „	1000 „
„	33,196	„	1000 and upwards.	
„	13,361	„		
<hr/>				
	10,893,528			

The first 5,205,411, M. Rubichon shows to belong to about half as many families, who thus derive a mean rental of about 40s. per annum from their property. There are, besides, about 4,250,000 of families (out of the whole 5,446,763 that are owners of land), and who appear to derive an annual income of 68s. only from their portions of the soil. “Voilà une plaie profonde,” exclaims M. Rubichon, “quatre millions de familles républicaines et affamées !”^{*} The possession of this property by no means ensures even a livelihood. Nothing is more common than for these little freeholds to become forfeited to the state, from the inability to pay the *impôt foncier* (which appears to be about 7 per cent on the rental.)[†] The unfortunate defaulter is allowed, on payment however of a registration fee of two francs, to give up for ever his little plot, in order to save his slender personalty and household stuff from the clutches of the tax-gatherer. This is not all: there are not quite 11,000,000 of separately rated *côtes foncières* in France, but these are divided into 123,360,338

^{*} The official calculation is, that there are

2,602,705	families whose rental is under	£2
875,997	„	4
757,126	„	8

4,235,828

[†] The *impôt foncier* amounts to 123,000,000 francs, which is 7 per cent. on 1,750,000,000, which Julien calculated was the net rent of real property in France. It must be remembered that there are no poor rates, highway rates, church rates, or tithes.

parcels, about eleven to a *côte*—not enclosures of the same farm in juxtaposition to each other, but more like our lands lying in common fields in England, perpetually intersected by those of the neighbours. Within ten years, more than half the value of the land of all France, 933,880,000*l.* worth of property has been proved to have changed hands (what a career for the Raineyes and Robinses !!), of which 372,680,000*l.* have been by inheritance in the usual course of nature ; 85,800,000*l.* by donations *inter vivos*, and with the commendable view of preventing dismemberment. But the residuary 475,400,000*l.*, i. e. *more than a fourth part of the whole fee-simple of the country, has passed in those ten years into the hands of complete strangers.* At this rate a generation and a half would see the entire kingdom in the hands of another race, totally unconnected with its former owners ; and we doubt whether, except in a revolution, a conquest, or a newly-settled colony, such a circumstance has ever been witnessed before.

These sales, of course, multiply the owners ; there is in France the same intense anxiety to possess a bit of land as in Ireland. It has given rise to the “*bandes-noires*,” an expressive term for an association of notaries, country bankers, attorneys, land surveyors, and jobbers of all sorts, who combine together when an estate is to be sold, tempt the owner with a good price and an exemption from all trouble to dispose of it to them, they then cut it up into lots to suit the needy market. A farm of 200 acres is thus parted off into twenty, fifty, or more allotments, which are paid for partly in money, and partly mortgaged : and this accounts for another phenomenon—the enormous extent of debt with which the land is burdened, considering that almost the whole of it changed hands at the revolution, that there was an entire sweeping away of tithes, charges, mortgages, fortunes, &c., and that almost every title in France is now less than fifty years old. Yet within that time, or, indeed, far less, the owners have managed to charge an income of £60,823,880 with a debt bearing an interest of £22,466,531. This debt increases, and must continue to do so. The avidity to possess land, the fancied independence that it confers on its owner, acts on the 4 $\frac{1}{4}$ millions of families and their kindred unceasingly. “These heroic men,” says their friend and admirer Michelet, in his “*Peuple*,” “fight, as it were, for their lives, but usury fights against them with a force of 4 to 1 ; their land brings them in 2 per cent., and they pay 8 per cent. for borrowed money.”

“If fortunes can be re-constructed,” said the committee we have before spoken of, “landed estates cannot : “plus son héri-

tage est petit, plus il tient quelque fois à la conserver ; vous le couvririez d'or que vous n'en obtiendriez pas la cession." As in Celtic Ireland and in Celtic Wales, so in Celtic Gaul we meet with the same characteristic offences : first, there is the *mauvais-gré* ; ill-will—that is, if the incoming tenant has neglected to secure not only the good will and assent of the way-goer, but has also disarmed the hostility of the neighbourhood, he becomes the object of systematic attack—the reader will readily call to mind the Rebecca grievances at the open-air meetings in Wales a few years ago, when “no stranger was to be allowed to take land in the principality.” And oddly enough, too, this *mauvais-gré* chiefly flourished about *Douai*, from whence our Irish priests used, in Ante-Maynoothian days, to import their religion and politics. Secondly, the gleaning ; and, thirdly, the *grapillage* (turning flocks into the vineyards) are great and increasing abuses. An army of gleaners follows close upon the harvesters, the latter have sometimes to struggle in defence of their own sheaves. The *grapillage* is chiefly by night. It is quite in vain to resist or to prosecute ; the offending proprietor is sure to experience the vengeance of the enemy, who cuts his vines and ruins his crops. Every one must be struck with the curious fact, so contrary to our fond anticipations, that the general possession of property by the people diffuses corresponding notions of respect for it ; but this does not seem to have yet taken place in France ; the poor man's little property, from its being less well guarded, is often more the object of depredation than that of the rich. We learn, too, by-the-bye, to estimate the value to be attached to the opinion of the political economist Rossi, once an *émigré* professor at the university, then an obsequious peer of Louis Phillippe, and since his ambassador at Rome. “These 5,000,000 of cultivators, favourably seated on their own soil, form an impassable barrier against disorder.” We shall see. Two beggars, says M. Rambot,* were taken up for mendicancy at Bordeaux on the 13th Dec., 1837, convicted and imprisoned ; it was proved before the tribunal that both of them, brothers, were members of the Municipal Council of the commune of Aspect, in the department of St. Gaudens, which is as if a member of the Andover Board of Guardians were to be guilty of a similar offence in England. The same writer states, that a respectable inhabitant from La Meurthe, visiting Paris, fell in, while walking along the Faubourg Montmartre, with a beggar, in the

* Richesse Publique.

shape of a freeholder of his own village, an ignoble miser, whom he well knew to be possessed of a landed estate worth 30,000 francs, or £1,200, and of which, therefore, the income was £40 or £50 a year. Our own annals of mendicity are quite as surprising, but our beggars are more consistent; they do not ask alms in London or Liverpool, and then return to figure in their native parishes as land-owners and members of parochial boards.

In earlier times it was doubted whether, on the whole, the *morcellement* was increasing; unfortunately, the returns made by the 80,000 officials, lawyers, surveyors, tax-gatherers, and registrars, whom it is the policy of the French government to retain in its pay, do not distinctly state how that fact is; we are left to inferences, and they appear to justify some of M. Rubichon's conclusions. In some departments that had been more accurately examined in 1826, when the law before alluded to was under discussion, the lists, or *côtes foncières*, presented

In 1815..... 149,314 contributors.

In 1826..... 161,732 ,,

Being an increase of 12,458 ,,

Those paying less than 16s. of impost, (having an estate of, say of £6 or £7 rent,) were,

In 1815..... 116,433

In 1826..... 133,903

So that, though the general increase had only been 12,418, yet the number of smallest ratepayers had increased by 17,470, by the diminution, as we shall see, of the other classes. Those paying from 16s. to 25s. had in the same time become fewer by 621; those of from 25s. to 54s. 8d. by 1,328; the next class paying from 2l. to 4l., were 1,436 less; that above them taxed at from 4l. to 20l.; 1,394 fewer, from 20l. to 40l. diminished by 167; and those above 40l. by 96. We have before remarked upon the 123,360,338 parcels, whose variety of ownership we cannot ascertain exactly, but the continual severance of properties is almost as mischievous as the diminution of them. It is, indeed, sometimes contended, that on the whole the additions and cumulations balance the divisions. But assuming that each parent brought an equal portion into the common fund, in the usual case of three children there is a diminution of one-third; if there were only two to inherit, there would be neither gain nor loss. In the case of an only child there would be a gain, as far as mere pecuniary and apparent value; but by the separate allotting, the use, convenience, and real worth of the property, that which commands

the *pretium affectionis* is most materially impaired; the paternal inheritance in the first and more common case, where there are three co-heirs, is cut up into three lots; a three-storied house may afford each child a flat like a chamber in the inns of court. The lawyers know better, however, than to ruin each other by law—"entre lobos no se comen"—"dog won't eat dog," said a sporting friend who had spent a dozen of years of his life at law. The maternal inheritance, already at a distance perhaps, is trisected in the same fashion. We have adopted a simple, and even a favourable hypothesis, assuming that both the parents were fortunate enough to possess each an integral estate in severalty,—that it is for the first time the rule of vulgar fractions comes into play, and with a moderate denominator; but what if we get into compound fractions, when the inheritance is one-third of one-fourth of a parcel in White Acre, and one-third of one-half of a barn in Black Acre? It is certain that the process will account in no great number of years for an enormous multiplication of the 120,000,000 of parcels, even though the *côtes foncières* might be only moderately augmented; the system tends to introduce a complete *adscriptio glebæ* of the peasant, who is precluded from circulating as a free labourer; he will thus ally himself in marriage only with those of the adjoining field, and the possession of a miserable *sillon* alongside of his own will be the inducement to unite himself with the person of its owner.

Among the worst results of the system of compulsory division of the land, and the absence of adequate authority, or of sufficiently clear-sighted private interest, is the destruction of the forests on the skirts of the mountains, followed by the waste of the mountain itself, and the ruin of the fertile country below. The note of alarm had already been sounded, among others, by M. Dugied, formerly prefect of the department of the Basses Alpes. In 1844, the Académie des Sciences Morales et Politiques commissioned M. Blanqui to visit the localities and investigate matters on the spot. This gentleman describes a tract more than 250 miles in extent, along the foot of the mountains, from the Jura to the lower part of the Var, where the engineer ought to be constantly under arms against the enemy—in winter to clear out the passages---in spring to re-open communications—in the summer to defend the banks of the ravines and rivers from the ravages of the torrents—a warm wind melting the snows too rapidly—a thunderstorm, with its attendant down-pour, nay, even a scrambling flock of goats shaking down a few stones, serve to block up a passage, and cause, perhaps, an overflow

or an avalanche. Where the natural protection of the forest has been withdrawn by the inconsiderate hand of the woodman, the soil, bare of all grass and trees, pulverised by a scorching sun, is precipitated down the valleys in the shape of sand, pebbles, or even great blocks of rock bounding along and destroying whatever they came in contact with. A district so invaded wears the appearance of desolation and death. Huge beds of pebbles, many yards thick, cover a whole territory, surrounding the largest trees, over-top and bury them, and do not leave to the peasant even the shadow of hope. Torrents wear out ravines in the mountain sides, heap up the transported materials against the bridges which cross the stream, which are thus irresistibly overborne, blown up, and destroyed. Some of them on issuing from the mountains spread themselves over the land like a fan, with a radius of 3,000 yards, thus spreading a mantle of pebbles over the face of nature. For the most part they (the mountains and quondam forests) belong to the communes, and have thus no master; but when they have, and the owners belong to the present class, it is just as bad—“*après moi le déluge*,” seems literally to be their motto. Timber, coppice, bushes, even broom and heath, are bared off the sides, and the parched soil is abandoned to the mercy of the elements. But, continues Blanqui, “the evil has reached its height; it must be dealt with, and that speedily, unless it is intended that the last inhabitant shall quit the country as soon as the last tree is felled. Barcelonette, Embrun, Verdon, Dévoluy, are a sort of Arabia Petræa in the Hautes-Alpes. In fifty years time there will be such another desert between France and Piedmont as there is between Syria and Egypt.” And further, “Had that country, now so desolate, been used in the way nature pointed out, *i.e.* remain in wood and pasture, what riches would it not have possessed, for the Alps are the promised land of sheep: the flocks that come up lean and poor from the Camargue (on the Rhone), breathe in the mountains an air which restores them, and where they multiply astonishingly. All that is requisite is to regulate the right and mode of pasture, so that the flocks may become the chief reliance of that district instead of its bane.”

In some of these wild districts, we learn from M. Blanqui's report, that the inhabitants are as little influenced by French usages as in the Marquesas; even the importation of a wheelbarrow would cause as much sensation as a locomotive, for, threatened with avalanches of snow in winter, and by furious torrents in summer, there are no roads at all. “The prefect of one of these departments, when on a tour of inspection, has

been made prisoner by a sudden rise of the rivers, blockaded with his *conseil de révision*, the whole civil staff of the department, and driven to escape through the dominions of the King of Sardinia in order to regain the seat of his government." Some of these torrents have had their beds raised along a considerable distance to the height of twenty feet in a single season; the disasters multiply, as the slopes become bare of wood—"La ruine de dessus," observed a peasant to Blanqui, "sert à précipiter la destruction de dessous." No one is rich enough to defend his individual frontage; no commune can afford or agree to fence its collective property. The cause, he says, and truly, are the défrichement, the breaking up and cultivation of the slopes. These evils do not come alone: after the avalanche come the lawsuits and lawyers, like plague and pestilence in the wake of famine. Law is good, and lawyers too, in a rich country which can afford to pay for the one and maintain the other: the French peasant, in spite of poverty, is obliged to resort to both. One man defends his land by a campshut run out into the middle of the stream, with the object of turning it into his opposite neighbour's bank; a second puts up a few perches of masonry; a third a dry wall; there are coffer-dams, fascines, gabions full of stones: the law, says Blanqui, forcing every one to an insulated policy, where the right course would be association against the common enemy. On one of these rivers (the Drac) the government interfered, and laid out in fifteen years 24,000*l.*, chiefly in dams and embankments: should the river happen to surmount them, a part of Grenoble would be submerged. In the four departments alluded to, a special legislation with respect to landed property is loudly insisted on, and government have been urged to plant 18,000 or 20,000 acres every year, at an expense of 1*l.* per acre.

The Pyrenæan region witnesses similar mischiefs; the inhabitants of St. Gendens, Aspect, St. Biat, Bagnères-de-Luchon, says a government inspector, after having dug and tilled the lower slopes of the mountains, "are now obliged to transport their '*funeste industrie*,' to the heights where the position of the labourer is not free from danger. In the Hautes Pyrénées the higher and further you advance into the mountains the more the *morcellement* and its mischiefs are seen, so much so that the peasant disputes the soil with every rock that is in the least covered by it."*

* Mons. Michelet is an ardent friend of the *morcellement*; his evidence, therefore, is above all suspicion. This is what he says, *Hist. de France*, p. 257, vol. 2,

This, however, will probably continue in spite of experience; that is, the experience possessed by those who unfortunately cannot prevent the ruin.

On the other sides of the Alps, as long ago as the seventeenth century, the mischievous effects of stripping the sides of mountains of cover and forests had been perceived and deprecated. The learned Mengotti was consulted about it: in 1665 a congress was held, at which were Viviani, Cassini, Michelini, and other celebrities, to devise what steps should be taken to prevent or remedy the damages done by the rivers in the north of Italy. Projects, almost as various as those to which the unfortunate French peasant has recourse, were proposed, but a general unanimity prevailed as to the best preventive. Plant the mountains with trees, encourage cover, brushwood of all sorts—an eldorado, in short, for sporting game-law champions and the Ameers of Scinde.

The origin of these formidable devastations, though they have been hastened by the *morcellement* and the hand-to-mouth usage of the soil which it involves, dates from further back than the Revolution. Undoubtedly, square or paralellogramic allotments, eighty acre sections, look well enough on a map; and in an open champaign country, marked by no strong physical characteristics, their imaginary lines form as good divisions as any other. But in a country of ravines, mountains, and torrents, nature overthrows the puny parcellary attempts to deal with her by piece-meal; and requires to be met and controlled by a combination of powers, guided by superior intelligence. Yet all France, long before the Revolution, had become so completely lawyer-ridden, that the parliaments, those self-elected privileged bodies, successfully monopolised the administration, not only of the law, but by means of their members that of almost all real property. It is upon them and their ignorance that is chargeable the development of the disease we have been describing. This began when the jurisdiction over the “eaux et forêts” were transferred from the noblesse in the provinces to a magistracy seated at Paris. The whole kingdom came to be divided into twenty *généralités*, each presided over by a bourgeois judge, who

about the Pyrenees—“At the revolution every barrier fell, the poor population commenced at once the work of destruction. They scaled, fire and mattock in hand, even the nest of the eagle; they cultivated the abyss, suspended by ropes; trees were sacrificed to the most trivial uses—they cut down two saplings to make a pair of wooden shoes.” * * * * “The goat, that adventurous beast, that possesses nothing—the levelling animal, was the instrument of this demagogic invasion—the terror of the desert.”

purchased his office, obtained thereby a certain position and consideration, was styled a grand maître des eaux et forêts, and became thenceforth a gentleman. He was thus necessarily the judge for the religious orders and for the noblesse, each of which possessed a large extent of this description of property, like our stewards of manorial courts, but doing infinitely more mischief. “Cette hiérarchie d’une intolérable ineptie,” says M. Rubichon (and we dare say with great truth), were always disputing, and ended by stripping the Alps and Pyrenees of their woody clothing.

This body, living at Paris, in the absence of all competent testimony or knowledge of their own, decided in their gross ignorance on matters for counsel in which the princes of Italy had summoned to their aid the wisest of the philosophers, mathematicians, and engineers of the peninsula in the preceding century. The Revolution, among other good things, swept away these généralités; but the conseil d’état, which is not among good things in M. Rubichon’s eyes, has succeeded. As long, however, as they had the power, they decided on the report of an inferior officer on the complaints and averments of distant suitors, describing the catastrophes of nature to a man who never saw either mountain or torrent, and to whom the hearsay events of which he was to judge sounded as strange as an Arabian tale. M. Rubichon speaks on this part of his subject with all the authority of experience. He and his forefathers had for many years been engaged in the timber trade in some of these very mountains belonging to the then généralité of Grenoble; and he says emphatically, that “a justice sitting in the rue St. Avoye, at Paris (the seat of the tribunal), is, practically speaking, a denial of all justice whatsoever.” “Parliaments have, for 500 years, been making war against both noblesse and clergy. Now it is just possible, though hardly very probable, that these two orders may rise again in France; but it is neither within the limits of probability or of possibility that Alps which have slid down should be raised, or that the rubbish and ruin they have caused should be removed and remedied.”

For want of an accessible tribunal which might have interfered to prevent such abuses, the communes first began to claim the right of picking up the dead wood.* Thirty years’

* The 2 and 3 William IV., c. 71, called the Prescription Act, curiously enough adopts the very same term of thirty years’ uninterrupted exercise of a *profit à prendre* as a valid prescription—twenty for an easement; but the incidents mentioned above are evidently the “right of common, profit, or benefit,” expressed in the English statute.

enjoyment of this liberty rendered it legal and traditional as a right. Then was set up a custom for the inhabitants to take wood in the forests for building or fuel (our estovers and hous-bote): thirty years' uninterrupted enjoyment of this has converted it into an absolute property. Then the owners of lands adjoining the forests contended that they were aggrieved by their shade; hence the right set up of pruning and cutting back; then of cutting down what was so cut back; then of grubbing what had been so cut down. So, from one usurpation and encroachment after another, the forests absolutely disappear. At the close of 1500 the crown then owned, on the skirts of the Pyrenees alone, more than 620,000 acres of forests. A commission of inquiry, issued by Louis XIV. in 1670, could only find half that extent. At the revolution of 1789 there only remained 100,000 acres. The policy of the Restauration was rather to sell these forests, unwisely, as M. Rubichon thinks; between 1817 and 1826, there were sold in France 650,000 acres.

Before dismissing M. Rubichon we would beg to draw the reader's attention to some particulars connected with the produce, with reference to geographical position and climate, for which he is probably not prepared. We mean the remarkable superiority enjoyed by the *north*—the inferior climate, as might have been supposed, and less generous in its harvests therefore, than the south. But the reverse is the case—as it is, we believe in England and Scotland—the colder, damper, more backward country *surpasses* her southern competitor in the skill which distinguishes her farmers.

In France the difference is very marked in favour of the more northern provinces, in crops, even, which are more peculiarly the attributes of a genial climate. In the *nord oriental*, for instance, the yield of wine is at the rate of 250 gallons the acre, while for the whole kingdom the proportion is only 166. The price is $5\frac{1}{2}d.$ per gallon; yet even at that low figure it is beyond the reach of numbers, who can only obtain *piquette*, *i. e.* the lees after the juice has been expressed by a first process, and are afterwards wetted up again, like the small beer after the extraction of ale. In corn and all other produce, with the trifling exception of *épeautre* and hemp, the northern regions largely exceed the south—a fact which ought to keep up the spirits of our English agriculturists. Hops, as in England, bring in the greatest gross yield, being 20*l.* 2*s.* per acre, but then there are but 2,042 acres; tobacco, 13*l.* 7*s.* 6*d.*; and *woad*, of which there are 36,244, at 10*l.* 15*s.* All these demand great expense and labour, so that the net yield to the

occupier, after payment of every out-going, is probably very moderate, and fully accounts for the small breadths so occupied. There are 2,279,738 acres of potatoes, whose produce on an average is about 104 bushels per acre—not much more than a third of what our English labourers raise by spade husbandry on their allotments. The price is 9*d.* per bushel.

We have now gone through the principal heads of MM. Rubichon and Mounier's statistics. As an epitome of all that is known relative to the production of agriculture, it is unequalled by any thing we possess in this country. The work would well repay the perusal of it by those who are curious in these matters; far from being a dry inquiry, it is lively, spirited, and abounding in pleasantry. And even after making every allowance for the strong political prejudices of the chief author, his work develops a state of affairs pregnant with danger, not only to the progress, but ultimately to the liberties, of France, and with instruction and warning to her neighbours. The morcellement, at whatever rate it proceeds, be the ultimate agrarianism near or remote, cannot, as it appears to us, be stopped until the absolute ruin of the country shall have been effected. The majority are interested in maintaining it; that is, if three be the average of children to a marriage, there would be two in favour of equal division against one who might wish for an alteration; as long, that is, as the property to be cut up is worth the operation; it is only when it ceases to be so that we can expect from a general national assent the renunciation of the then valueless birthright. “C'est un vice *radical* irrémédiable,” wrote M. Dupin of it twenty years ago, in his *Forces Productives de la France*: he observed that England then averaged three times as much meat, milk, and cheese for every individual of her population as France. But then he calculated that the animal force, applied to equal surfaces of territory, was in Great Britain eleven times that of the human, while in France it was only four times. The petite culture appears to substitute men for animals, but on condition that the former undertake the labour performed in this country by the latter. We beg the reader's attention also to the following conclusive passage in M. G. Molinari, a writer in the *Revue Encyclopédique*. “Sans doute le privilège de primogéniture est chose inique, détestable, mais le privilège qui nourrit n'est il pas préférable à l'égalité qui affame? L'esclavage de la faim, du mal-être, n'est il pas le pire de tous les esclavages? Réduisons la question à ses termes les plus simples pour la saisir. Est il préférable d'avoir une agriculture florissante moyennant une subvention payée à une classe

privilégiée, que d'avoir une agriculture pauvre sans payer de subvention ? Si l'on compare la subsistence du peuple en Angleterre avec celui de la même classe en France, la réponse à cette question ne demeurera pas un instant douteuse ; le privilège aura incontestablement gain de cause." Since a modification of the principle of equal and compulsory division was improbable, the entire conviction, not of the goodness of the cause but of the hopelessness of escape, may account for the opinions of some of the French political economists respecting it. M. Drôz approves of the morcellement, while he admits that large farms would produce more food. M. Say thinks extensive farming multiplies towns and favours improvement ; while he doubts whether there is the same amount of labour and value invested in the little peasant holdings in Switzerland and Germany as in the large farms of England.* "Une culture misérable n'est donc pas toujours la compagne nécessaire de la petite culture, mais elle est inévitablement la compagne de la paresse et de l'ignorance." A mixture of all kinds (and we subscribe heartily to it) he thinks best : large for corn, grass, oleaginous plants, and live stock ; small for olives, bees, silk, hemp, flax, and legumes ; subject, of course, to climate. MM. Say and Storck are at issue respecting the influences in promoting or checking political independence, severally attributable to the agricultural and manufacturing occupations of mankind. "Landowners," argues the first, "are always slaves to the government. China, Hindostan, Persia, and Egypt, were so ; and so was France until the eighteenth century. England obtained her liberties only when she became commercial ; Pitt's despotism rested on the squires."

On the other hand, Storck denies the patriotism of the manufacturers, and declares they run away if threatened with war ; that they emigrate to avoid taxation ; while the landowners cannot escape. "Le propriétaire foncier est le seul qui connaisse véritablement une patrie, qui sâche la défendre, et à se dévouer pour elle." We rather incline to think the truth lies nearer M. Storck's position than M. Say's. It is not exact that all agricultural nations are slaves ; though some nations of slaves have been agricultural, there are manufacturing communities that know little of freedom, and there will be more in time. In the four countries instanced there were no landlords : the Emperor, the Mogul, the Shah, and the Pharaoh ; the

* M. Sismondi has much insisted on the enormous accumulation of capital on holdings of small extent by the peasantry who own them.

government, in short, were sole owners—no man owned either property or life. He was tenant at will for both at the nod of a despot. England was purely agricultural in her great struggles for liberty: that against Charles I. was mainly conducted by a Huntingdon grazier and a Buckinghamshire country gentleman; and Pitt's despotism grew with the growth of our manufacturers, and was at last more warmly supported by those engaged in them than by our territorial gentry.

M. Dunoyer, in his "*Liberté du Travail*," has some sensible remarks on the size of occupations:—"When the soil is fertile there may be more subdivision than where it is poor. But the division* will *eventually be in proportion to the capital of those seeking to cultivate it*: as, for instance, England is rich, therefore her farmers can afford large breadths. If the owners of the land are poor and ignorant, small cultivation will prevail; and small properties, cut up into '*lambeaux*' (rags), will command a better price. So that in France, though the *tendency* of the law is complained of, the temptation to the greater owners is to anticipate it, and set themselves up to supply the market." M. Rambot improves on this, and denies that there is any *juste-milieu*; he would at once dismember and sell in detail all those domains that are beyond the cultivation (by the hands?) of a single family!! The land would then be seen to yield three times more than it now does; the number of servants and labourers would be diminished, to make way for more owners and more occupiers. We are reminded of the Abbé de Lamennais' caustic remark:—

"Problème.—Trouver une organisation où tout le monde soit propriétaire. Solution.—Établir une organisation où nul ne soit propriétaire.

"Problème.—Réclamer les conditions de la liberté universelle. Solution.—Constituer la base d'un esclavage universel."

M. Rambot's work appeared since the Abbé's remarks, or one would almost imagine that the latter had been intended to expose the absurdity of the sentiment expressed in the passages we have quoted, so pointed is their application, and so happy their turn. In fact, a statutory division of the soil on the death of each owner is wholly inadequate as a preventive against poverty; and the only equality that can be attained by forcible regulations is one of distress and indigence. In the Nivernais, says M. Bourgoing, a president of one of the agricultural societies of the department, where agriculture,

* This line of remark indicates the decrease of the capital applied to farming; if correct, it is an additional demonstration that France is growing poorer.

collieries and iron works, and manufactures, have made great progress, and where the condition of the labourer is superior to what it is in the rest of France—so much so, that for eighty days of the summer his wages are 1s. 8d. a day,—yet his whole yearly hiring brings him in but 16l. 3s., on which he keeps a wife and three children, pays taxes, rent, and obtains nothing from the poor-rates. For his dwelling, including from twenty to forty perches of ground, he pays 2l., besides 2s. 6d. for impôt, and 2s. in lieu of work on the roads. The dwelling is particularised as consisting of *one room, one garret, and one cellar*. . . . Further on we are told that it is small, damp, *generally without windows*, air and light enter by a single door, which generally shuts ill, and lets in the wintry cold, and all the exhalations of the neighbouring dunghill. Really sooner than divide such houses, it would be better for the rural population to betake themselves to tents—we mean the camel-hair tents of the Bedouins, thick, dark, and heavy—good defences, in short, against both heat and cold. A large proportion of the dwellings throughout France are of the meanest description—the extremes of grandeur and misery are as strikingly contrasted there as elsewhere. The 50,476 houses of Paris contain, on an average, 34 openings. On the other hand, France has 346,401 human habitations within its limits (like rabbit burrows) with *but one opening*: from 1,000,000, therefore, to 1,500,000 of her population are totally independent of the glazier; 1,817,328 have but two openings, *i. e.* one window, besides the door; 1,320,937 more possess but three apertures. These 3,483,466 houses (more than half the total* number of houses in the country) have only this moderate provision for ventilation and light. The numbers are accurately known, for the best of all reasons, because they are all taxed—no exemptions—a consideration respectfully suggested to the window-tax agitators at home, where no door pays, and no house with less than eight windows is subject to the duty. Of the duty, amounting, in the year 1845, to 1,812,035l., nothing is paid by the very poorest classes. The mode of assessing the tax is unreasonable; the public cannot be made to understand why a window six feet wide and three feet high should be charged double one of six feet high and three feet wide; but so it is. The same on a tradesman's larder and a duke's drawing-room in Belgrave Square. The just mode would be

* The total number of houses in France is 6,805,402; of windows and doors, 37,253,359; about $5\frac{1}{2}$ openings to a house. The tax in France yields £1,348,000, being, apparently, about 9d. per window.

to tax the number of square feet through which light is admitted, without reference to the number of windows; and the tax, besides being as productive, would then be fairly and evenly distributed.

Mons. H. Passy, formerly a peer and a minister, has endeavoured to defend the system attacked by Rubichon. First he tells us large properties do not ensure large farms, as witness Europe before the French revolution, and Ireland at the present day; where, though the estates are extensive, the occupations are minute. Next, that large farms can co-exist with a general minute subdivision of the soil. The reader will at once see the impossibility in practice of the bureaucratic hypothesis. How can a farmer in order to obtain the occupancy and uniform cultivation of the lands belonging to 50 different owners, some under disabilities, others minors, others beyond seas, how is he to conclude agreements contemporaneously with such a variety of wills, ages, interests, each jealous of the other, each fearful that his own plot may be robbed for the benefit of his neighbours, all having such diversity of estate in their land—old and young, reckless and prudent, obstinate and selfish? Even in England where the advantages of cultivation on the larger scale are so much better understood, it appears in those parishes where common fields still continue to exist, expense, ignorance or other feelings interfere to prevent the throwing them together, and practically the result is that each patch is tilled by a different tenant, is in a different course of the rotation, and really does present the appearance of what he terms a “*vaste échiquier*.”

M. Passy, though he adduces a few instances in which the production has increased—aware that the whole range of statistical facts by no means indicate agricultural prosperity in France, endeavours to apologise for it with the reflection that land on the whole will always fall into the hands of those who turn it to the best account; the competition is so great that it will not remain in the hands of those who do not thrive upon it: the owners of these parcels after striving hard for a livelihood for some years are compelled, by increasing misery, to sell them, and this puts everything right again. Surely this is a desperate remedy to rely upon. Is a man to be taught first of all to place an infinite value on the possession of his bit of land, to devote year after year of his strength and manhood to its cultivation, merely to learn that in their decline, in the evening of his life, he is to be driven forth into exile? Are the affections, the feelings, the habits of those who have struggled so hard to extract a competence from an ungrateful

vocation for the best and most active portion of a life, to be overlooked? Is the severing of these ties without danger? Is the bitter disappointment of numbers, deprived alike of past comfort, of present possession, and of future hope—a contingency which a statesman should contemplate with complacent optimism?

Mons. Passy is not much more than half right when he adverts to the safety enjoyed by a state in which a large portion of the population is engaged in manufacturing articles of primary necessity, and for which, therefore, the demand is so general as to ensure for the producers an uninterrupted livelihood. The industry which supplies the caprices and pleasures of consumers in distant countries, of men whose manners we cannot influence, of nations liable and likely to be supplied by a shift of the fashion, a turn of the die, an accidental discovery made in some other quarter to the exclusion of our own, is no doubt precarious. Its failure would bring home to the heart of England unexampled distress. Manufactures of more palpable utility do not appear exposed to similar vicissitudes. Our clothing trade has seldom been long suffering, while our silk manufactures in Spitalfields, like those of Lyons, are periodically subject to severe depression. But then, on the other hand, a land in which no luxury is enjoyed, one entirely free from “barbaric splendour and pomp,” still more so one in which property is equalized by law, leaves no margin and store for bad times; it supposes famines unknown; seasons uniformly healthy and propitious; it provides no reserve fund wherewith a rich class, as in England, has occasionally kept alive a poor nation, such as that of Ireland.

Of all those who have written on the merits of the *petite culture*, no one is entitled to more honourable mention than the late M. Sismondi. An agriculturist, a philosopher, and an historian, he had the experience of a landowner in England, Switzerland, and Tuscany, and his researches into the condition of the humbler husbandman in those and other countries were stimulated by the kindly nature of the writer. No one can read his description of the metayers in Tuscany,* without being struck with the charm he infuses into his picture of their contentment; but then it rests entirely on what he feelingly called the *patriarchal* system, which excludes all change:†

* Et. Pol. p. 170.

† M. Sismondi expressly condemns the land-jobbing in America, and the frequent sales and changes of ownership in France, which impress on land the character of a circulating capital.

there is no room in it for the acquirement of large landed estates by the iron-master or railway director, their advent would alter everything. Where it best succeeds the peasant is not the owner of the land, as in France; he is under the kindly tutelage of the Tuscan noble. If he is to be looked upon as a substitute for the labourer, it may be a good exchange; eight or ten of them settled on fifty or one hundred acres replace what in England would be a farmer and three or four families of labouring men.

“Among the metayers in Italy,” says M. Sismondi, “the younger do not marry; they remain members of the family and die off—*un seul prend une femme et se charge des soins du ménage*—they do, however, sometimes; then the *metairie* is divided, the owner is tempted by more rent; a *folle enchère* goes on (Ireland again), and in the *riviera* of Genoa, parts of Lucca and Naples, instead of half the crop the metayer gets only one-third (while two-thirds go to the landlord), and he then feeds only on millet or maize.” The same excess and poverty would, in M. Sismondi’s opinion, have taken place in Tuscany, had not a more compassionate feeling protected the peasant from extreme conditions.

“While ancient Europe was divided among small farmers, their prosperity was increasing with wonderful rapidity. Cultivation extended from the plains even to the summits of the mountains. The Campagna of Rome, now so desert, made wholesome by the breath of men, was covered with so dense a population, that five acres were supposed amply sufficient to support a family. In spite of frequent wars population increased continually; *as a hive of bees gives out a swarm every year, so it was necessary for every city after the development of one generation to send out a colony*, and this colony recommencing social progress after the same principles with peasant proprietors, and expecting everything from agriculture, rapidly advanced towards the same prosperity.” It seems to us, that in these words M. Sismondi has unwittingly passed sentence upon his favourite system. A population at every generation is obliged to emigrate, *i. e.* to expel some other more industrious but less warlike people than themselves from their holdings and unexhausted improvements; and while exempt from the prudential or preventive check themselves, inflicting the positive one in all its horrors on their neighbours. “*Data pax, ager ademptus*,”—“*propter populationes ager non fructu modo caruerit, sed villa incensa, direpta omnia, pecora abacta*,” and to crown all, “*tributum iniquo suo tempore im-*

peratum," (the pleasures of direct taxation). The Sabines were visited with "incendiis, non villarum modo, sed etiam vicorum." Next year, perhaps, the Sabines paid them off, "ingentes hominum prædas, pecorumque egere."—"Æqui uri sua popularique passi."—"Consul prædabundus exiit—ingenti laude prædâque Romam redit." This is the description Livy, whose second book lay before us at the time, gives in a dozen pages of as many years' incidental forays in the early times, in which M. Sismondi would have us believe in the ease, happiness, and comfort of the Italian husbandman. Ancient emigration can hardly be compared with their own. The extreme populousness of ancient Italy, the complete cultivation of tracts now abandoned to the buffalo and the wild boar, as in the Campagna and the Tuscan Maremma, left very little land vacant for new-comers, without dispossessing the old proprietor: *culta navalia miles habebit*. Melibœus was ousted without ceremony. The throwing off of such a swarm cost the parent state little or nothing; but the distance of our Transatlantic colonies causes this country at the present time to incur an expense nearly equal to the sustenance of an individual for a whole year merely to transport him across the ocean to its nearest dependency. The efforts, therefore, of an old country to relieve itself of its surplus population now-a-days will be limited by the portion of its revenue that it can afford to devote to defray the cost of the transport of the emigrants and their sustenance on their arrival out, unless the sale of land in the colony, or other circumstances, enable the expense of the voyage and outfit to be provided from its resources.

Allusion has been made to the scarcity of horses resulting in France from the system of small farms. We collect the same deficiency in the ancient Italy, to which we are reverting with M. Sismondi. The Romans were always poor in cavalry, and what they had were from want of practice inferior to that of their enemy. The legion in early times consisted of 3,200 men, of which less than one-twentieth were cavalry; later it was 4,500, of which one-fifteenth were cavalry. The elder Africanus, taught by his early experience in the equestrian skirmish at the Ticinus, is said to have induced the Romans to increase their proportion; in the latter part of the Punic war the legion was 6,900, of which one-tenth were mounted. At Cannæ the defeat began with the attack of the Roman cavalry by that of the Carthaginian. Pyrrhus again defeated their horse by means of his own in his first general engagement with

them. At Zama the tide turned in favour of the Romans; but Scipio owed it to a charge made by his Numidian light-horse on the enemy early in the conflict.

Hannibal commenced his march from Spain with 102,000 men, of which nearly one-eighth (12,000) were cavalry. Alexander's expedition against Darius numbered 35,000, of which one-seventh were cavalry. It would appear from other sources, also, that the Roman armies contained a smaller portion of cavalry than those of any other nation of the time, a singular circumstance considering their admirable military discipline; but which may be accounted for from the mode of occupancy of their land being unfavourable to breeding. There is no want of horses or buffaloes in the modern Campagna.

We have already alluded to the vicious circle on which French statisticians find themselves compelled to reason in respect of the morcellement. Another consequence of the attempted equality is an equal jealousy not of the old territorial usurpations which are gone, but of commercial or manufacturing splendour which may succeed them. "By the side of the formidable fortunes which the chiefs of manufacturing industry erect for themselves in a few years, one sees other families who for ages had possessed an honourable patrimony disappear, and their scattered members are swept into the ranks of mere proletaires. It is seen that it is no longer from patient labour that a fortune is to be realized, but only from a capital thrown into rapid circulation, and risked in every sort of adventure. The inevitable effect of an *industrie* thus composed is, that it opens all the hazards of a game of chance, the plunder, by the greater gambler, of those who can only play for small stakes, with all their immoral consequences---the insolence and corruption of the winner, the degradation of the loser. The latter hides himself for a time in the shade, struggles in silence against misery, tries every thing, succeeds in nothing, and sees in perspective nothing but a *revolution, a hospital, or a suicide*."* He goes on to describe the favourite of fortune turning the château into a factory by means of the mills he has stopped, and producing cheap by means of the hands whose owners he has stripped of all other livelihood---and their results, the rising up of one class, the sinking down of the other, "then sales and resales---every thing, in short, which men agree to call national prosperity---then statisticians and traffic takers, and other busy-bodies, come forward and proudly number the engines, the railways, the canals, &c., and they are sincere (says he) because

* Rambot, Richesse Publique.

they see only the victorious portion of the society, they take no account of the number of formerly independent nouns substantive, now become mere adjectives and stipendiaries." These fears in a French breast are not altogether groundless. Indeed it will be curious to observe, whether even this country with all its elements of stability and *vis inertiae*, will succeed in dealing with men, societies, and corporations, wielding vast wealth and patronage, whose existence was unknown to the state or the legislature in the last generation. It remains yet for us to make the experiment how far the combination of executive authority and resources, whether of leagues or companies, by individuals more capable of controlling the state than likely to be controlled by it, while they muster in numbers on the benches of the House of Commons, is compatible with the continuance of the public liberties.

But to revert to France. The rising power there, be it military despotism, bureaucratic or pecuniary corruption, finds in the forced equality the complete prostration of every class interest and element of resistance—a *table rase* for its operations at its fit season. Long ago Mr. Malthus apprehended that a country with such institutions respecting inheritance was the natural birthplace of military tyranny. The development of this may depend on the opportunities afforded by future events to the profession of arms; and hitherto, in Algeria and Tahiti, glory has been too closely allied with ridicule to admit of the soldiery saluting their leader imperator. But the Crown alone, as the legally recognised depository of civil power, through its responsible ministers, is scarcely a match, even with the army on its side, for the monied materialism. All are entangled in its complication, corrupted by its allurements, or overborne by its might. The history of the late trials of MM. Cubières, Parmentier, and Pallepra is an illustration of this. These unfortunate delinquents were promoted from a mere competence to bear sway in the most luxurious capital of the world; the city which is the chief abode of pleasure, taste, and wit; the royal exchange for the diplomacy and affluence of Europe. The corruption of functionaries so tempted is too natural for us to hope that the conviction that followed their accidental detection will effectually abolish it. The danger to the state remains the same. Hitherto money, eloquence, arms, letters,—Laffitte, Thiers, Soult, Guizot,—every notability, in short, has been disarmed, led captive, or at least, been neutralised and played off one against the other by the prince who, for seventeen years, has filled the elective throne. But will its actual con-

stitution endure when the keystone of the arch so curiously balanced, rather than cemented, when the able head that alone has poised with such singular dexterity these incoherent but not inert materials, is at last withdrawn.

Since the foregoing pages were first printed, in October last, Mr. M'Culloch, writing in December, makes, in his recent treatise* some remarkable and almost prophetic observations on the operation of the law of compulsory partition in France. For after observing, that happily the undue subdivision of the land had made but little progress in Great Britain, which, besides supporting itself and the hordes of Irish immigrants that poured in, was able to purchase food for all Ireland also, he "shudders at the contemplation of what would have been the state of the people in 1846-47 had the land of England been so much subdivided as that of Ireland. Famine in its sternest reality, must, under such circumstances, have been "every where prevalent." . . . "The distress of the present year (1846-47), has been wholly confined to the quarters in which subdivision has been carried to excess: that is, to Ireland, France, parts of Belgium, and Rhenish Prussia. . . . The subdivision of the land under the law of compulsory partition tends to reduce it, whether the occupiers subsist principally on potatoes or corn, to patches fit only to maintain families in the meanest condition in ordinary years."

Further on Mr. M'Culloch remarks, that this law "affects the stability of the public institutions of the country more strongly even than it does its agriculture; that the aristocratical element, held so necessary in all well constituted governments by the greatest philosophers and statesmen, from Aristotle and Polybius downward, is no longer to be found in French society; and the compulsory division of the soil, while it prevents the growth of an aristocracy, impresses the same mobility on landed possessions that it impressed on the families of their occupiers. Monarchy in France has been stripped of those old associations and powerful bulwarks whence it derives almost all its lustre and support in this and other countries. The throne stands in solitary, though not unenvied dignity, without the shelter of a single eminence, exposed to the full force of the furious blasts that sweep from every point of the surrounding level. There is nothing intermediate, nothing to hinder a hostile majority in the Chamber of Deputies from at once subverting the royal branch of the con-

* A Treatise on the Succession to Property vacant by Death, by J. R. Madlines, Esq., member of the Institute of France, 1848, p. 193.

stitution or changing the reigning dynasty. The peers created for life only are the mere creatures of the court There is no class with the deep and abiding interest in the support of the existing institutions that seems indispensable to protect a government against impulses originating in popular prejudices and passions, and to give it the sense of security that is necessary to enable it to act consistently on sound principles. Napoleon will most probably be found to have formed a correct opinion, when he declared that *the destruction of the aristocracy had proved fatal to all subsequent efforts for establishing a constitutional monarchy in France*. The revolution had attempted the solution of a problem as impossible as the direction of balloons. An aristocracy is the true support of the throne, its moderator, its lever, its fulcrum. The state without it lies like a vessel without a rudder—a balloon in the air.”

FINIS.